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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/526,177	03/15/2000	Takashi Munakata	44084-443	9237

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WASHINGTON, DC 20005-3096

EXAMINER

TRAN, DOUGLAS Q

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2624

DATE MAILED: 12/12/2003

6

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/526,177

Applicant(s)

MUNAKATA ET AL.

Examiner

Douglas Q. Tran

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5,7,8 and 10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5,7,8 and 10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-5, 7-8, and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Mandel et al. (US Patent No. 5,823,529) (or Mandel '529') and Mandel et al. (US Patent No. 5,358,238) (or Mandel '238').

As to claim 1, Mandel '529' discloses an image forming apparatus (i.e., electronic printer 14 in fig. 6) capable of being connected to a plurality of external apparatuses (15 in fig. 6) and performing image formations based on data sent from the external apparatuses (col. 31, lines 30-33 describes that trays for receiving recording sheets on which images are formed "discharged" from inside of the printer; the sheets at these trays are already printed with images from the print jobs "col. 2, lines 34-37"), said image forming apparatus comprising:

a plurality of paper ejection trays (figure 5 shows the printer having a mailbox system includes the mailbox bins or trays 11, 116, 23 in fig. 5, col. 12, lines 46-49) for receiving sheets on which images are formed (col. 31, lines 30-33 describes that trays for receiving recording sheets on which images are formed "discharged"); and

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notification means (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for notifying a user of a specific one of the paper ejection trays in which a last ejected sheet is present (col. 29, lines 22-34: the user send the print job to the “almost-full” bin of the printer, the print job is separated into two parts, the first part is delivered to the “almost-full” bin until the bin is full, then the rest of that print job is delivered onto newly assigned bin 11. It is noted that the rest of that print job would be at least one of the last sheets. The user is informed of that automatically through a message “col. 29, lines 33-34”. Therefore, the user would be notified his print job locates on two different bins including the last assigned bin storing the last part of the print job. The printer inherently comprises a component corresponding to notification means for generating a message to the user of the status of his print job stored in the specified trays, or the notification means would be a controller “100 in the mailbox system in fig. 5” because there only is a controller in this mailbox system for generating a display instructional signal to the terminal 15 of the assigned user “col. 29, lines 4-9”. Thus, the controller 100 would also notify the status of the assigned user’s print job at the printer trays).

Although Mandel ‘529’ teaches notification means (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for notifying a user of a specific one of the paper ejection trays in which a last ejected sheet is present, Mandel does not teaches a plurality of notifying units disposed on the trays.

Mandel ‘238’ teaches a plurality of notifying units disposed on the trays that is controlled by the controller (100 in fig. 14) (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

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It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the notifying means of Mandel '529' includes a plurality of notice units respectively corresponding to the bins as taught by Mandel '238'. The suggestion for modifying the notifying means of Mandel '529' can be reasoned by one of ordinary skill in the art as set forth above by Mandel '238' because the modified printing system would increase to be flexible and capability to have a different kind of notifying means for notifying the status of the completely print jobs to the user.

As to claims 2 and 3, Mandel '529' and '238' teaches every feature in claim 1, and Mandel '238' further teaches a controller (100 in fig. 14) which controls the notifying units including a display units (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

As to claim 4, Mandel '529' and '238' teaches every feature in claim 3, and Mandel '238' further teaches the controller controls a plurality of display units, that is corresponding to the plurality of paper ejection trays receiving the sheets ejected in response to at least one ejection instruction from the same external apparatus, to display same display content to (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

AS to claim 5, Mandel '529' and '238' teaches every feature in claim 2, and Mandel '529' further teaches the controller sends a content of the notification to the external apparatus that sent the at least one ejection instruction (col. 16, lines 20-26) (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

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As to claim 7, Mandel '529' discloses an image forming apparatus (i.e., electronic printer 14 in fig. 6) capable of being connected to a plurality of external apparatuses (15 in fig. 6) and performing image formations based on data sent from the external apparatuses (col. 31, lines 30-33 describes that trays for receiving recording sheets on which images are formed "discharged" from inside of the printer; the sheets at these trays are already printed with images from the print jobs "col. 2, lines 34-37"), said image forming apparatus comprising:

a plurality of paper ejection trays (figure 5 shows the printer having a mailbox system includes the mailbox bins or trays 11, 116, 23 in fig. 5, col. 12, lines 46-49) for receiving sheets on which images are formed (col. 31, lines 30-33 describes that trays for receiving recording sheets on which images are formed "discharged"); and

notification means (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for notifying a user of a specific one of the paper ejection trays in which a last ejected sheet is present (col. 29, lines 22-34: the user send the print job to the "almost-full" bin of the printer, the print job is separated into two parts, the first part is delivered to the "almost-full" bin until the bin is full, then the rest of that print job is delivered onto newly assigned bin 11. It is noted that the rest of that print job would be at least one of the last sheets. The user is informed of that automatically through a message "col. 29, lines 33-34". Therefore, the user would be notified his print job locates on two different bins including the last assigned bin storing the last part of the print job. The printer inherently comprises a component corresponding to notification means for generating a message to the user of the status of his print job stored in the specified trays, or the notification means would be a controller "100 in the mailbox system in fig. 5" because there only is a controller in this mailbox system for

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generating a display instructional signal to the terminal 15 of the assigned user “col. 29, lines 4-9”. Thus, the controller 100 would also notify the status of the assigned user’s print job at the printer trays).

Although Mandel ‘529’ teaches notification means (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for notifying a user of a specific one of the paper ejection trays in which a last ejected sheet is present, Mandel does not teaches a plurality of notifying units disposed on the trays.

Mandel ‘238’ teaches a plurality of notifying units disposed on the trays that is controlled by the controller (100 in fig. 14) (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the notifying means of Mandel ‘529’ includes a plurality of notice units respectively corresponding to the bins as taught by Mandel ‘238’. The suggestion for modifying the notifying means of Mandel ‘529’ can be reasoned by one of ordinary skill in the art as set forth above by Mandel ‘238’ because the modified printing system would increase to be flexible and capability to have a different kind of notifying means for notifying the status of the completely print jobs to the user.

As to claim 8, Mandel ‘529’ and ‘238’ teaches every feature in claim 7, and Mandel ‘238’ further teaches the controller controls a plurality of display units, that is corresponding to the plurality of paper ejection trays receiving the sheets ejected in response to at least one ejection instruction from the same external apparatus, to display same display content to (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

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As to claim 10, Mandel discloses an image forming apparatus (i.e., electronic printer 14 in fig. 6) capable of being connected to a plurality of external apparatuses (15 in fig. 6) and performing image formations based on data sent from the external apparatuses (col. 31, lines 30-33 describes that trays for receiving recording sheets on which images are formed “discharged” from inside of the printer; the sheets at these trays are already printed with images from the print jobs “col. 2, lines 34-37”), said image forming apparatus comprising:

a plurality of paper ejection trays (figure 5 shows the printer having a mailbox system includes the mailbox bins or trays 11, 116, 23 in fig. 5, col. 12, lines 46-49) for receiving sheets on which images are formed (col. 31, lines 30-33 describes that trays for receiving recording sheets on which images are formed “i.e., discharged”);

a control unit (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for, when the number of sheets required to execute an ejection instruction from one of the external apparatus exceeds a capacity of one of said paper ejection trays, ejecting a part of sheets to one of said paper ejection trays and continuously ejecting the remaining sheets to another paper ejection tray (col. 29, lines 22-33: the user requests for sending the print job to the assigned bin which is “almost-full” even he knows, the print job is separated into two parts, the first part is delivered to the “almost-full” bin until the bin is full, then the rest of that print job is delivered onto newly assigned bin 11. The controller 100 would eject the remaining sheets to another paper ejection tray, with respect to col. 28, lines 64-67, because the controller 100 will normally know into which bin further sheets will be directed by the sheet distribution system of the mailbox system, the carriage can be moved to that next

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bin to be user and, col. 30, lines 22-26, the controller 100 for controlling the entire of operation of the mailbox module unit 10); and

notifying means (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for notifying a user of the paper ejection trays where the part of sheets and the remaining sheets are present (col. 29, lines 22-34 describes that after the user's the print job is separated into two parts which are delivered onto two different trays, the user is informed of that automatically through a message "col. 29, lines 33-34". Therefore, the user would be notified his print job locates on two different bins including the last assigned bin storing the last part of the print job. The printer inherently comprises a component corresponding to notification means for generating a message to the user of the status of his print job stored in the specified trays, or the notification means would be a controller "100 in the mailbox system in fig. 5" because there only is a controller in this mailbox system for generating a display instructional signal to the terminal 15 of the assigned user "col. 29, lines 4-9". Thus, the controller 100 would also notify the status of the assigned user's print job at the printer trays).

Although Mandel '529' teaches notification means (i.e., a controller 100 in fig. 5) for notifying a user of a specific one of the paper ejection trays in which a last ejected sheet is present, Mandel does not teaches a plurality of notifying units such as the displaying units disposed on the trays.

Mandel '238' teaches a plurality of notifying means including a plurality of display units disposed on the trays (please see fig. 18 indicates each bin has an associated LCD, col. 27, lines 57-63 and col. 3, lines 11-15 and col. 5, lines 37-43).

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It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the notifying means of Mandel '529' includes a plurality of notice units such as the displaying units respectively corresponding to the bins as taught by Mandel '238'. The suggestion for modifying the notifying means of Mandel '529' can be reasoned by one of ordinary skill in the art as set forth above by Mandel '238' because the modified printing system would increase to be flexible and capability to have a different kind of notifying means such as the displaying units for notifying the status of the completely print jobs to the user; and such displaying units would easily recognize the status of the print job by the name of the user.

Response to Arguments

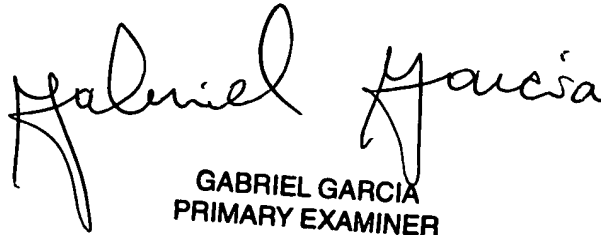
Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-5, 7-8, 10 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. This action is made **non-final**.

Contact Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Douglas Q. Tran whose telephone number is (703) 305-4857 or E-mail address is Douglas.tran@uspto.gov.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 305-4700.

Douglas Q. Tran
Dec. 08, 2003


GABRIEL GARCIA
PRIMARY EXAMINER